YOUR FRONT-ROW PASS TO FASHION WEEK

ALL THE TRENDS, CELEBS AND PARTIES FROM THE WEEKEND. PAGES 22-23

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Monday, September 14, 2015 www.metro.us | t: MetroPhilly | f: MetroPhilly

BIRD BASH

Eagles kickoff. The Eagles open their highly anticipated 2015 season against the Falcons on "Monday Night Football." We break down the keys to the game. PAGE 30

Penn Charter product Matt Ryan and Eagles' new quarterback Sam Bradford will square off in Atlanta. / GETTY IMAGES

Former cop honored to meet 'God on Earth'

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2 'Serena Williams still the favorite to dominate in 2016 and beyond'

3 'Someone was wearing teddy bear slippers at the Herve Leger show'

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Boston voter turnout at 15 percent by noon on Mass. Election day
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On the go

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Is Fairmount really ready for the pope?

Epicenter. Papal pilgrims arriving next week are going to be hitting Philly hardest in one of its most tony neighborhoods.

Diners enjoy sidewalk seating on Fairmount Avenue, with Eastern State Penitentiary in the background. / METRO FILE PHOTO

Around Fairmount, there are plenty of different opinions about what to do during Pope Francis' visit to Philadelphia for the World Meeting of Families, which begins next week.

Dara Forsthoffer, 33, has a simple plan: Get out of town.

"I live right in the no-drive zone, so I planned to work in a different city that week," she said. "I heard it's going to be like a blizzard but with no snow. I can't ski on it, so I'm out of here."

No matter what the final turnout for the festival is, it's certain that massive crowds will be on the Ben Franklin Parkway during the weekend of Pope Francis' visit. His Mass is expected to be held at the Art Museum — right on Fairmount's doorstep.

The entire neighborhood is within the secure area known as the "Francis Festival Grounds," formerly known as the traffic box, which will stretch from Girard Avenue to South Street. Vehicles aren't allowed to drive into the box.

"The pope is the pope. Doesn't faze me. I'm a truck driver," said Michael Stewart, 49. "They're just taking it a little too far. If the president came, they wouldn't go to the same extremes."

For the mostly small businesses that populate Fairmount Avenue for several blocks up from the parkway, the popularity of Pope Francis could mean either dollar signs or headaches, given the challenges of stocking up to feed hungry pilgrims.

Mick Houston, owner of the neighborhood institution Jack's Firehouse, is somehow optimistic and relaxed about everything to do with Pope Francis.

"Worst-case scenario, we sell out and we have to close," Houston said.

He pointed out crowds coming to see the pope won't be as tough to manage as the huge crowds in Fairmount every year to see the Fourth of July fireworks.

"Even if you have double that amount of people, it wouldn't scare anybody from the neighborhood," Houston said. "Papal visitors are going to be respectful, a little bit older crowd, more low-key, not trying to get drunk and party."

Just this month, Made in America 2015 brought 130,000 music lovers to the parkway.

"The neighborhood is not unfamiliar to hosting really large events," said Kevin Moran, executive director of the Fairmount Community Development Corporation. "I do expect spillover onto Fairmount Avenue from folks who want to remain out of the highest security zone or who are just looking for coffee or sandwiches."

Most locals' biggest concerns are the essentials, stocking up on groceries or getting access to medical care, Moran said. His advice: Plan for it like you would for a blizzard.

"It's nothing to be fearful about," was Houston's takeaway. "If you are, get out of town."

SAM NEWHOUSE
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Honored. Former Philly cop and family to greet pope

Retired Philly Police Officer Rick Bowes and his family were officially told at Mass on Sunday in Somerton that their family has been selected to greet Pope Francis when he arrives in Philadelphia on Saturday, Sept. 26.

Msgr. Joseph P. Garvin of St. Christopher Parish informed Bowes, his wife, son and two daughters about the honor. Msgr. Garvin will be with the family, who are members of St. Christopher's, at the Atlantic Aviation terminal when they meet Pope Francis.

"We all just really can't believe this is happening," Bowes said of himself, wife Bernadette, and kids Matthew, 12, Riley, 11, and Gabrielle, 9.

"We're going to be meeting the pope, the vicar of God, and in my opinion, he's a future saint," he said. "I've met heads of state within Pennsylvania, but nothing can compare to meeting the pope. Being Catholic, and all you've been taught your whole life — he is God on Earth."

In essence, the Bowes will be the first people in Philadelphia who Pope Francis sees, according to the World Meeting of Families organizers, and will present him with flowers.

Bowes said it's particularly exciting to meet Pope Francis because of "how forward thinking he is and bringing the church up to where it needs to be, in my opinion."

Bowes had to leave the force due to a wound he sustained while taking out the shooter who killed Officer Patrick McDonald in 2008.

SAM NEWHOUSE

Retired police officer Rick Bowes / PROVIDED

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Obtaining compensation for your injuries from a bicycle accident is a right you have. But it can be complicated. To make sure you get all of the compensation you are entitled to, it is best to consult with an attorney experienced in handling these personal injury matters.

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Keeping all the balls in the air

Michael LeRoy performs his finale by juggling and hula-hooping with a spinning plate on his chin, enthralling children at Rittenhouse Square on Sunday. LeRoy has been working as a street performer for 25 years.

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A statue of boxer Joe Frazier was unveiled on Saturday. / GETTY IMAGES

Smokin' Joe Frazier finally gets his statue

Hometown heroes. Four years after the legendary local boxer died, Frazier was immortalized in a new sculpture.

Outside Xfinity Live! in the South Philly sports arena complex, a nine-foot-tall statue will now stand in tribute to one of Philadelphia's hometown heroes: legendary boxer Joe Frazier.

Xfinity Live is the former site of the First Union Spectrum boxing ring — where Frazier fought some of his toughest matches, and where the Rocky statue was located from 1991 to 2006 until it was moved to its current location at the Philadelphia Art Museum.

Frazier's lack of recognition while Sylvester Stallone's fictitious boxer Rocky Balboa enjoys international celebrity and stands as a statue over the art museum steps has been a sore point for locals in recent years. Now Frazier, who had a cameo in the original "Rocky," has his own statue.

Smokin' Joe' was immortalized in the pose that Frazier took after flooring Muhammad Ali.

Frazier died in 2011 at age 67 of liver cancer.

He won the Olympic heavyweight boxing gold medal for the United States in 1964 and held the world heavyweight boxing crown from 1970 to 1973.

Frazier is eternally linked with Ali thanks to their trilogy of fights in the 1970s which rank among the most famous ever in the sport. Frazier won the first and Ali took the next two.

Frazier won the world heavyweight title in 1970, knocking out champion Jimmy Ellis, after Ali had been stripped of the championship in 1967 for refusing to fight in the Vietnam War due to his Muslim beliefs.

Frazier, who was born in segregated South Carolina in 1944 as the youngest of 12 children, amassed a career record of 32-4-1.

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Viva Mexico! Independence Day celebrated

Thousands of Mexican-Americans and Mexican immigrants danced to the sounds of Norteno music while eating traditional food during the annual Mexican Independence Day Festival at Penn's Landing on the waterfront on Sunday. The historic Mexican "Grito de Dolores" or Cry of Dolores, on Sept. 16, 1810, marked the beginning of the Mexican War of Independence against Spain.

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A man looks out toward the U.S. from the Mexican side of the border fence that divides the two countries in San Diego. / GETTY IMAGES

Ad invokes Reagan to attack GOP on immigration

Ad. It highlights Trump's demand for a wall along the Mexican border and that immigrants were "bringing crime" and are "rapists."

Days before a Republican presidential debate at the Ronald Reagan Library, an immigration advocacy group invoked the former president to attack the tough immigration rhetoric of certain candidates, including front-runner Donald Trump.

A television ad launched on Sunday by the National Immigration Forum Action Fund contrasts Reagan's call for the United States to welcome all people with the stances of Trump, Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker and Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, who have proposed an end to birthright citizenship and urged other crackdowns.

The ad shows a clip from Reagan's 1989 farewell address from the White House in which he references the journey to the United States of John Winthrop, an English Puritan who imagined America as a "city upon a hill."

Reagan described his idea of the "shining city" as one that was "teeming with people of all kinds living in harmony and peace."

"If there had to be city walls," he added, "the walls had doors and the doors were open to anyone with the will and the heart to get here." REUTERS

Europe

Struggling Germany seeks 'orderly' tackling of migrant crisis

Germany appealed on Sunday for a rapid return to "orderly procedures" in dealing with Europe's migrant crisis, as the continent's most powerful nation acknowledged it could scarcely cope with thousands of asylum seekers arriving daily.

A week after Chancellor Angela Merkel effectively opened German borders to asylum seekers, one senior minister said the country had reached its limits. Bild newspaper reported that Berlin wants to reintroduce frontier controls temporarily, affecting arrivals from Austria first.

Germany has halted train traffic from Austria, a spokeswoman for Austrian rail company OeBB said on Sunday. She said the head of the German rail company told his Austrian counterpart of the decision.

Amid political bickering among European governments, the crisis claimed yet more lives — 28 migrants drowned off a Greek island on Sunday when their boat sank, the coast guard said.

Germany has joined smaller and poorer countries such as Greece and Hungary that are struggling to manage the huge flow of desperate people. REUTERS

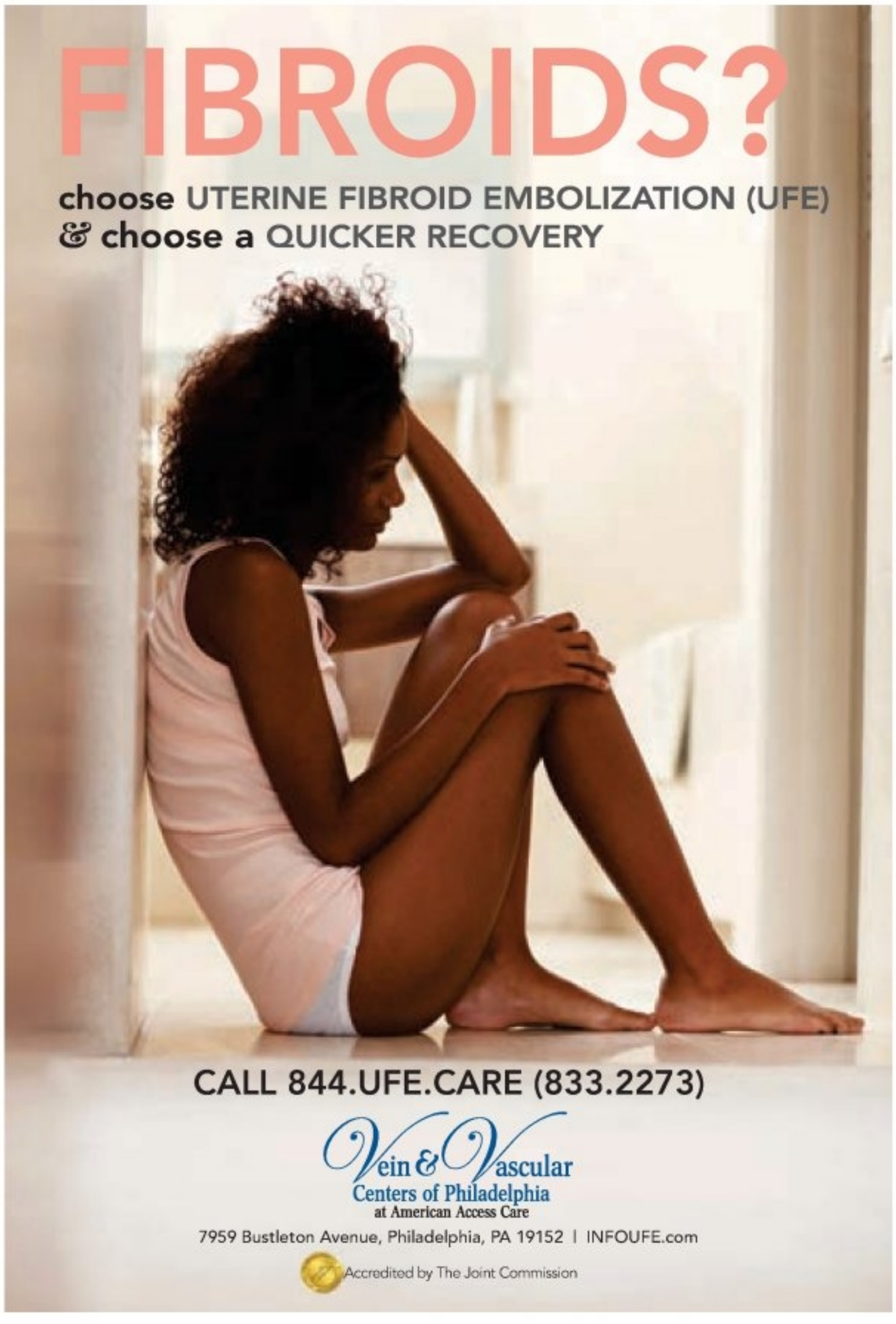
Nuclear official

Iran says uranium exploration results promising

Preliminary exploration surveys for raw uranium in Iran are progressing well but it is too early to announce any discoveries, the spokesman for the Atomic Energy Agency of Iran (AEOI) was quoted as saying on Sunday.

Behrouz Kamalvandi spoke to the ISNA agency a day after AEOI chief Ali Akbar Salehi was quoted by state news agency IRNA as saying recent "discoveries" had made Iran confident of its reserves and a new mine would become operational soon.

The discovery of raw uranium, which can be refined to make nuclear fuel, would make Iran's disputed nuclear program more self-sufficient and raise concerns among those who fear the program is aimed at developing a bomb, a charge Iran denies. REUTERS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America's city rankings set for Texas-size shake up, Houston to edge Chicago

Energy industry. This accounts for about 40 percent of Houston's economy and has sent the fortunes on a roller coaster ride for decades.

A view of the Houston skyline / GETTY IMAGES

Hidden in the haze of the petrochemical plants and beyond the seemingly endless traffic jams, a Texas city has grown so large that it is poised to pass Chicago as the third-biggest in the United States in the next decade.

Houston has been one of the fastest-growing U.S. cities for years, fueled by an energy industry that provided the backbone of the economy, low taxes and prospects of employment that have attracted job seekers.

But Houston also embodies the new, urban Texas, where political views have been drifting to the left, diversity is being embraced and newer residents are just as likely to drive a hybrid as a pickup truck.

Houston's move is also indicative of demographic shifts unfolding in the United States that will increase the population and political clout of the Lone Star State over the next several decades.

Projected by 2025

2.7M

Houston is projected to have a population of 2.54 million to 2.7 million by 2025 while Chicago will be at 2.5 million, according to official data from both states provided for their health departments. New York and Los Angeles are safe at one and two respectively.

Within eight to 10 years, Houston is forecast by demographers in the two states to pass Chicago, which has seen its population decline for years, as the third-largest city.

Houston has long been associated with the risk takers in the oil industry and more recently as one of the better cities to find a job.

"Texas has a long tradition, and Houston has it in spades, that we are not so much interested in where you are from. We want to know what you can do," Houston Mayor Annise Parker said in an interview with Reuters.

Chicago officials were not immediately available for comment. REUTERS

Employment

Job growth

Since 1969 Houston has been one of the most successful major cities in terms of per capita personal income growth. Since about 2003, about 650,000 jobs have been created in the Houston area, according to the University of Houston.

The Houston-area unemployment rate has remained below the national average for years, according to government data, while the Chicago-area has recently been above it.

However, Houston's growth, coming with few zoning restrictions and a loose regulatory system in Texas, has led to persistent problems in air quality and traffic congestion. REUTERS

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Five things you need to know

1 Al Qaeda chief urges lone wolf attacks, unity

Al Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahri called on young Muslim men in the United States and other Western countries to carry out attacks inside there and urged greater unity between militants.

"I call on all Muslims who can harm the countries of the crusader coalition not to hesitate. We must now focus on moving the war to the heart of the homes and cities of the crusader West and specifically America," he said in an audio recording posted online on Sunday, referring to nations making up the Western-led coalition in Iraq and Syria.

He suggested Muslim youth in the West take the Tsarnaev and Kouachi brothers, who carried out the Boston marathon bombings and Charlie Hebdo shootings in Paris respectively, and others as examples to follow.

It was not clear when the recording was made but references to former Taliban leader Mullah Mohamed Omar as being alive suggest it is at least two months old. Omar's death was announced by Afghanistan's government in late July.

Zawahri reiterated his position on Islamic State, repeating what he said in a recording posted on Wednesday - that he viewed the group's claim to be a caliphate as illegitimate but would join them in fighting Western and secular forces in Iraq and Syria. REUTERS

AYMAN AL-ZAWAHRI
GETTY IMAGES

2 Death toll from Okla. prison fight rises to four

A fourth inmate has died and three others remained hospitalized on Sunday, a day after a fight broke out at a privately owned prison in Oklahoma, prison and state officials said.

The "inmate-on-inmate altercation" at the Cimarron Correctional Facility lasted less than two minutes on Saturday afternoon, according to the Corrections Corporation of America, which owns and operates the prison in Oklahoma.

Three inmates appear to have been stabbed to death and a fourth later died at a medical facility, state Department of Corrections spokesman Alex Gerszewski said on Sunday. REUTERS

3 India police hunt for owner of explosives after blast

Indian police said on Sunday they were hunting for the owner of illegally stored explosives which accidentally detonated in the center of a crowded town, killing at least 88 people.

Rajendra Kaswa, a local businessman, has been charged with illegally storing gelatin sticks and other explosives next to a restaurant and busy junction in the town of Petlawad in central India, officials said. He also faces charges of criminal negligence and culpable homicide.

"He is on the run. One of his accomplices has already been arrested. REUTERS

4 Thousands evacuated as wildfires sweep on

Gov. Jerry Brown declared a state of emergency on Sunday in Northern California areas hit by a fast-expanding wildfire that injured four firefighters and forced thousands of people to evacuate small towns near wine country.

The firefighters were hospitalized with second-degree burns after they were dropped off by helicopter to build containment lines against the so-called Valley Fire, which broke out on Saturday in Lake County, north of San Francisco and then spread quickly in hot weather and drought conditions. REUTERS

5 Trump says high pay for CEOs is a joke, 'disgraceful'

Donald Trump said on Sunday high salaries paid to chief executives were a "joke" and a "disgrace" and said these were often approved by company boards stacked with the CEO's friends.

Trump said on CBS's "Face the Nation" that it was hard to tackle the question of corporate pay because too many corporate boards lacked independence.

"It's disgraceful. Sometimes the boards rule but I would probably say it's less than 10 percent; and you see these guys making enormous amounts of money. It's a total and complete joke," he said. REUTERS

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THIS IS SPARTA

The Foreman Forecast

TOM FOREMAN

TOM FOREMAN IS A CNN CORRESPONDENT AND AUTHOR OF THE UPCOMING BOOK "MY YEAR OF RUNNING DANGEROUSLY."

Like the cast of "300" you can bet the GOP candidates spent the weekend spray-painting their abs and girding their loins, because it's debate time again! The second meeting of the Republican contenders (hosted by CNN and moderated by my pal, Jake Tapper) will dominate coverage, and it is the centerpiece of my three things to watch this week in politics.

1. "THIS IS WHERE WE FIGHT!": The other candidates tried ignoring him, pointing out his mistakes, and even mocking his hair. Yet Donald Trump has become the unstoppable force; steadily rising in the polls, improving his favorability, and seemingly having a blast. Sure, the election is still more than a year away, but after watching Rick Perry get carried off on his shield you can bet the others will launch the sharpest attacks yet on the front-runner— and I would not be surprised to see Carly Fiorina lead the charge.

2. WAR ELEPHANTS: Those surreptitious videos of Planned Parenthood reps may not mean much to folks who dismiss them as unfair sneak attacks, but they triggered a battle cry for conservatives on Capitol Hill. Expect the House of Representatives to vote this week on a proposal to cut all funds for PP unless the group stops offering abortions — which of course is not going to happen. And even if you don't care about this issue, you might care about this legislation. Because there are rumbles the dispute could lead to — you guessed it — another government shutdown.

3. THE HOT GATES: Meanwhile, on the Democratic front Hillary Clinton's phalanx will continuing trying to anchor its defenses against what has becoming a troubling slide in the polls. Yes, her foot soldiers are quick and correct to say that she is still the favorite for the nomination, but her once-seemingly invulnerable position looks considerably weaker now than it did a few months back. Step 1: Wait for the GOP debate to end, then attack the winner. Fast.

Banking. Fed Reserve to dominate week of central bank meetings

The U.S. Federal Reserve building in Washington, D.C. / GETTY IMAGES

The U.S. Federal Reserve takes center stage in the coming week, eclipsing industry data from China, another grim inflation reading from the euro zone and rate decisions in Japan and Switzerland.

Guessing whether the Fed hikes rates on Thursday or opts for a later date, perhaps December, is something of a futile exercise because even the rate setters appear to be wavering and the decision will probably come down to the wire.

An unexpected drop in the jobless rate to 5.1 percent and an upward revision in second quarter growth to 3.7 percent support calls for a hike as the labor market tightens and utilization is at its best level since the global financial crisis.

Yet, futures only price a 24 percent chance of a hike as emerging markets, particularly China, struggle, inflation remains benign and some notable Fed watchers, like former Treasury Secretary Larry Summers, argue against a hike.

"My best guess is that the committee is also confused about what the right decision is, and as a result they are waiting to the last minute with making a decision," Torsten Sloek, the chief international economist at Deutsche Bank said.

"The cost of this approach is that market expectations become unanchored but they may view this as a small cost relative to sending strong signals ahead of a meeting where there seems to be limited consensus among (rate setting) members," Sloek said.

Data on Sunday showed growth in China's investment and factory output missed forecasts in August, raising the chances that third-quarter economic growth will dip below 7 percent for the first time since the global crisis.

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Hundreds finger-brush their dogs' teeth for world record

Dog day afternoon. Dog owners took a crack at a Guinness World Record at the Somerville Dog Festival on Sunday.

It was shaping up to be a historic day for Massachusetts dogs the state over Sunday as hundreds turned out to get their teeth brushed at once and break a Guinness World Record.

Armed with special finger brushes and hundreds of tubes of "poultry flavor" toothpaste, the pooches' owners scrubbed their K-9's chompers simultaneously. The old record for doing so was 268. No word was available yet on whether festivalgoers bested it.

The event was the main attraction at the sixth annual Somerville Dog Festival at Trum Field, a free gathering run by the Somerville Foundation for Animals that spreads awareness about dog health and also raises money for local canine-related charities.

The brush-off doubled as education for owners, said Marjie Alonso, a festival organizer and record-attempt emcee.

"Everybody hates brushing their dog's teeth," Alonso told Metro.

But they should be doing it, she said — once a day because crummy teeth can lead to health issues in dogs.

"We thought it would be fun to help people do this," she said. "Give them a sample and show them how to start, in a friendly, light way."

Before the attempt started, Stephanie Birkhimer of Burlington was prepping 5-year-old Kermit by letting the excited corgi Lab mix lick some samples of the chicken-flavored cleaning goop.

"He likes to be included in everything," Birkhimer said.

The meat paste is key when it comes to brushing a dog's teeth, said Karina Mroczko, owner of a 1-year-old mini golden doodle named Freddy, who was also getting ready to take part.

"He actually has this one in a full-size from his vet and he loves it," Mroczko said. "He just loves licking it, and that's when I get the chance to put my finger in there."

Marilyn Gonzalez said she hadn't been brushing her three dogs' teeth, but was inspired by the record attempt to start.

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Bones gets his teeth brushed by Eileen Koval of Fort Walton Beach, Florida.

Winthrop gets a helping hand from Marlena Ball as Gail Strickler attempts to brush his teeth.

Hundreds of dog owners gathered at Trum Field in Somerville to attempt to break the record for most dogs having their teeth brushed at one time. / ALL PHOTOS BY NICOLAUS CZARNECKI

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Moses Malone. NBA's 'Chairman of the Boards' dead at age 60

Basketball legend Moses Malone, a three-time most valuable player for the National Basketball Association, died early Sunday in Virginia at age 60, authorities said.

Malone was found unresponsive Sunday in the Norfolk Waterside according to a statement from Norfolk police. He was pronounced dead at the scene a short time later, police said.

The cause of his death has not been determined, police said. League officials declined to comment further.

Malone was in Norfolk for a charity golf event planned for Sunday.

Malone spent much of his professional career with the Houston Rockets and the Philadelphia 76ers, according to his biography on the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame.

Nicknamed the "Chairman of the Boards," he averaged more than 20 points per game for 11 straight seasons and was named the NBA's most valuable player in 1979, 1982, 1983, the biography said.

Quoted

"It is difficult to express what his contributions to this organization — both as a friend and player — have meant to us, the city of Philadelphia and his faithful fans."

Adam Silver, in a statement

"Even more than his prodigious talent, we will miss his friendship, his generosity, his exuberant personality, and the extraordinary work ethic he brought to the game throughout his 21-year pro career," NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said in a statement.

The 76ers expressed grief for their former player in a statement on Sunday.

Malone was born in 1955 in Petersburg, Virginia. The 6-foot-10 player was one of the first in the modern game to go straight from high school to playing professionally, according to the league.

Malone was named to the NBA's 50 greatest player list when it was compiled in the mid-1990s, it noted.

When he retired in 1995, Malone was one of the league's top scorers and rebounders, having made more free throws than any other player, according to his Hall of Fame biography.

"Moses holds a special place in our hearts and will forever be remembered as a genuine icon and pillar of the most storied era in the history of Philadelphia 76ers basketball," the team said in a statement posted on its website. REUTERS

Moses Malone helped to lead Philadelphia to a championship in 1983. / GETTY IMAGES

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Oh no! Julia Roberts divorce rumors!

Is there trouble in paradise for Roberts? ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

I generally don't like to hear bad news about Julia Roberts, despite her frosty relationship with the press. So these reports about moving trucks appearing outside her Malibu home while she's across the country for New York Fashion Week are truly troubling. According to Radar Online, the presence of the vehicles confirms reports of strife between Roberts and husband Danny Moder, which is just not cool. "The marriage is on the rocks," a source previously told the website. "There are a lot of issues with money. Julia said she doled out millions of dollars in mortgage payments for [Moder's father]. She helped him out for at least five years, and she got tired of footing the bill. It became a bone of contention between her and Danny." Enough of a bone that he'd sneakily move his stuff out while she's off being all glamorous and junk? Apparently, though I really hope not.

Don't mess with Jake Gyllenhaal's fast food

While promoting his Toronto International Film Festival premiere of "Demolition," Gyllenhaal copped to a youthful turn at letter-writing when KFC discontinued his favorite menu item. "When I was a little child, I was at school and we were supposed to learn how to write letters and complaint letters. And so I decided to write to Kentucky Fried Chicken and tell them that I was upset that they had discontinued Chicken Littles, which were a particular type of mini hamburger with fried chicken in the middle of it," Gyllenhaal admits. "It was deeply upsetting to me at the time and I felt like they should bring them back." KFC did in fact bring them back, but not until 2012. Still, a delayed victory is a victory. "I think I indirectly had something to do with that," he jokes. "It's empowering and I encourage most people, if they can, to really express themselves."

2

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THE WORD

Ned Ehrbar takes on the world of gossip.

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More than that old-time religion

Interview. Kate Bosworth and Hayden Christensen say "90 Minutes in Heaven" is about more than faith.

In "90 Minutes in Heaven," Kate Bosworth plays Eva Piper, whose husband Don (Hayden Christensen) claimed to have seen the afterlife in the wake of a near-fatal car accident. / QUANTRELL COLBERT

From the title, "90 Minutes in Heaven" — the film of Don Piper's best-seller in which he claims he saw the afterlife after a near-fatal car accident — would seem to be a religious film. But that's not how stars Hayden Christensen and Kate Bosworth see it. They see it as a drama in which Christensen's Don and Bosworth, as his wife Eva, struggle with his slow and painful recovery. Adding to the intensity is this: Bosworth was directed by her real-life husband, Michael Polish.

How did you two fall into portraying a deep history, especially considering one of you is married to the director?
Hayden Christensen: The first scene Kate and I did together, I didn't have to do anything. I was lying on a hospital bed unconscious. She walked into the room, and I remember getting a chill because she sounded exactly like [Don's wife, Eva]. Neither of us were trying to do impersonations, but we did want to capture these people the best we could.
Kate Bosworth: The funniest part of it all is [Michael] and I are married, and yet he's shepherding Hayden and me into playing married people. This is the third movie Michael and I have done together but the first we did while married. There was a wonderful element to being able to convey Don's story and the sacredness of their marriage while being ourselves married.

Don's recovery isn't smooth sailing for Eva either. She sometimes finds it almost impossible.
Bosworth: I became very close with Eva, which was a real blessing. She generously shared intimate details of her life with me. I was given a true road map of how she handled those events and how she felt through those times. What I responded to most was her honesty. She said it wasn't easy. Marriage isn't easy. Life isn't easy. Obviously there's a version of this that could have been sugarcoated, but they very much wanted us to tell the story as truthfully as we could.

The book has a strong following among church communities. Did you approach the movie as a drama or a religious film?
Christensen: We didn't really think of this as a religious movie. We thought of it as a story that we were all taken with. The [religious aspect] didn't factor into it for me at all. I was just moved by the story.
Bosworth: Most of my research was getting to know Eva as much as possible. For me, it was about being faithful to the Pipers. I wanted to be as faithful to Eva as I could. That obviously meant exploring her spirituality and what it meant for her to be a wife. That's where my focus was.

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One more thing

Becoming Don Piper

Hayden, can you talk about the physical aspect of your performance, which seems to be a major part of it?
Christensen: I was doing a bit of [lying around] leading up to the filming, just to get my body to atrophy a little bit. I was losing weight. Don lost a lot of weight in the hospital. He lost over 80 pounds, and very quickly, too. We were working with some budgetary restraints, and so my approach was to wear sweatpants and a sweatshirt underneath my clothes when I was supposed to be healthy Don. I had this mouthpiece to fill out my face a little more. I lost them as the film went on. It's a subtle physical thing, but it's still there, more for myself than for the audience.

KATE BOSWORTH AND HAYDEN CHRISTENSEN
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Movies. At Toronto, last year's winners are the top picks.

TIFF '15: Oscar winners double down

Eddie Redmayne transforms in "The Danish Girl." / FOCUS FEATURES

Was it really only a year ago that Eddie Redmayne and Julianne Moore launched their eventually victorious Oscar campaigns for "The Theory of Everything" and "Still Alice" at the Toronto International Film Festival? How time flies. Both thespians are back with new projects at the festival, and one thing is clear: They're doubling down for another shot at Oscar.

There's certainly historical precedence for an actor to dominate the Academy Awards in consecutive years — looking at you, Tom Hanks — but it takes that rare combination of material and timing. Last year, Redmayne turned in a career-defining performance as Stephen Hawking in a role that checked a lot of the right boxes for awards-season glory: the true story element, the disability angle, the triumph over adversity and an impressive degree of physical transformation.

Redmayne decided to take that transformation ball and run with it. His Best Actor win follow-up finds him playing Lili Elbe, a transgender pioneer and one of the first trans women to undergo gender-reassignment surgery. Early reviews for "The Danish Girl," which debuted at Venice before coming to TIFF, suggest that Redmayne's work is even stronger here than in last year's winning role. Better get that tux dry-cleaned.

Julianne Moore and Ellen Page in "Freeheld." / LIONSGATE

As for Moore, her devastating work in "Still Alice" might not have been a true story, but it was still riveting — so much so that Oscar buzz started for her at the film's TIFF premiere before it even had a distributor or a release date.

So how is she following that up? With "Freeheld," in which Moore plays a gay woman battling cancer — and unjust marriage laws. And this one is based on a true story. Moore stars as Laurel Hester, a decorated detective in Ocean County, New Jersey, who just wanted to have her police pension transfer over to her domestic partner (Ellen Page) and ended up sparking a turning point in the fight for marriage equality.

As Oscar bait goes, that's a pretty stacked deck — true story, triumph over adversity, facing discrimination, cancer. But the recent Supreme Court triumph for marriage equality could actually work against "Freeheld," turning a look at galling injustice into an interesting footnote in the history of an eventual triumph.

So will the Oscar follow-up gambits of Redmayne and Moore pan out, leading them to dual repeat showings at the Academy Awards? It's not that unlikely a prospect, actually — but then again, it's still a long way to Feb. 28.

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A new kind of warrior

Interview. Lee Jones takes on the role of a sensitive fighter in "The Bastard Executioner."

"The Bastard Executioner" premieres tomorrow night at 10 p.m. on FX. / OLLIE UPTON, FX

It's a bit of a jump to go from motorcycle gangs to the violence of medieval Wales, but that's exactly what Kurt Sutter has done in moving from "Sons of Anarchy" to his new series, "The Bastard Executioner." The show stars newcomer Lee Jones as Wilkin Brattle, a conflicted warrior. It's the Australian actor's first American role, but he's rolling with it. "It's a lot to take in, but it's very exciting," he says.

He describes Brattle as "a very spiritual yet tortured man. He's a former knight of Edward I, who's searching for a higher calling in life. He gets backed into a corner and has to fight for survival, and that leads him into becoming the executioner."

The show is clearly quite different from the world of "Sons," but there are some parallels. "It's about a very violent world, and family has a huge part in this — and also vengeance," explains Jones.

Not only was Jones a newcomer to the American TV scene, he was also a newcomer to the work of Sutter. He admits he "hadn't really" seen any of Sutter's earlier show, and he didn't try to fake any knowledge about it.

"No point in bluffing. I wasn't going to do that. I have seen bits, and what I've seen is amazing. This is very different for Kurt," he says. "I think people are kind of surprised by it, but thematically it's very close to what he focuses on. It's very visceral ideas of dark and light sitting close together."

That's certainly very true of Brattle, who seems to loathe violence but has, unfortunately, a high skill level with it and can't stop getting drawn back in to fighting. Jones jokingly calls him "a sensitive badass," given how much he gets into scrapes but feels conflicted about it. There's a pretty high level of gore, but Jones says he can "stand a lot. I've had to stand a lot already. It gets very gory, but it's a medieval piece. This is a violent world that we're in, so nothing's out of place. It's very real."

There was one moment that made him hesitate, however. "I had to deal with a snake the other day. I was surprisingly OK. I was a little worried for a second, but I actually really enjoyed it."

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Sword master

Fight scenes

With all of that fighting, Jones had to learn how to be a warrior. It was a bit of a change for him, though he had done a different form of fight choreography before. "I had [done it] for the stage. It's very different. It's my new favorite thing, though — I love it."

But no medieval warrior would be complete without a noble steed. "I'm doing a lot of horse riding in this. That's also my new favorite thing," he explains.

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Recipe

MARLEY SPOON

Our homemade syrupy marinade comes together with little effort and gives our salmon a lovely, burnished coating. We particularly enjoyed spooning it onto the fish and then scraping the pan's sticky surface. We sauteed plenty of fresh ginger and garlic for a truly flavorful side of corn and broccoli. Don't worry if your vegetables darken against the hot skillet. If anything, they'll impart a smoky flavor that pairs nicely with the sweet glaze. Cook, relax and enjoy!

Cooking time: 30 minutes
Attributes: fish
Calories: 740kcal/person
Allergens: fish, medium spice

What we send:
- 2 garlic cloves (0.4 oz.)
- 2 inches fresh ginger (1.2 oz.)
- ¼ cup light brown sugar (1.5 oz.)
- ¼ cup rice wine vinegar (2 oz.)
- 1 teaspoon Sriracha (0.25 oz.)
- 1 tablespoon ketchup (0.6 oz., 3 packets)
- 2, 6 oz. salmon fillets
- 2 ears corn (20 oz.)
- 7 oz. broccoli

What you need:
- neutral oil such as vegetable or safflower
- coarse salt
- freshly ground black pepper

Equipment:
- 2 skillets
- grater or microplane

Directions:

1 Prepare aromatics. Peel and finely grate or chop garlic and ginger.

2 Make marinade. Combine brown sugar, vinegar, Sriracha, ketchup, and half the garlic and ginger. Add salmon fillets and turn to coat.

3 Prepare corn and broccoli. Meanwhile, shuck corn (if necessary) then cut kernels off of cobs. Cut broccoli into small bite-sized florets.

4 Cook vegetables. Heat 2 tablespoons of oil in a skillet over medium-high heat. Add garlic and ginger and cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add corn and broccoli, season with salt and pepper, and cook, stirring, until browned, 5 to 7 minutes.

5 Cook salmon. Meanwhile, heat 1 tablespoon of oil in another skillet over high heat. Remove salmon from marinade (reserve marinade) and add to skillet, skin side up. Cook until browned, about 1 to 2 minutes. Carefully flip salmon, lower heat to medium and add marinade.

6 Serve. Let marinade boil down until thickened, about 2 minutes. Tilt the pan and spoon thickened sauce onto salmon. Divide the corn mixture among the plates then add a piece of salmon with its sauce. Enjoy!

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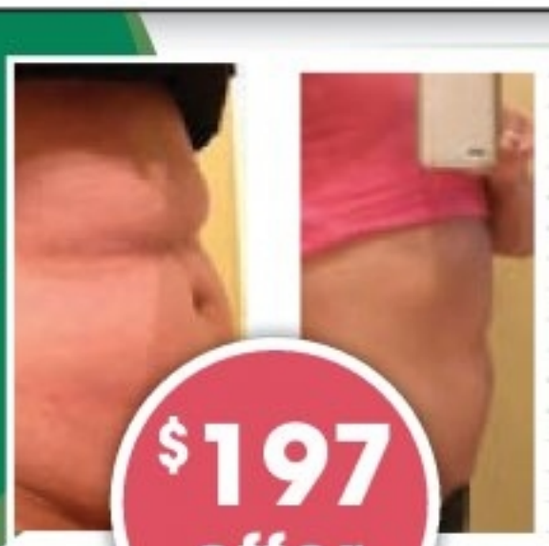
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Alexander Wang's epic after-party

GETTY IMAGES

The designer celebrated his 10-year anniversary with pole dancers and Lil Wayne.

TINA CHADHA
@TinaatMetro
tina.chadha@metro.us

#Wang10

Alexander Wang celebrated 10 years in the fashion biz with a collection that embodied the brand's ethos: the streets. And what do tough urbanites want to wear? Slouchy, boyish low-slung pants, crop tops, denim cut-off shorts, bomber jackets, cargo-finagled trench coats, mesh and, as always, hoodies. Wang's version repped his hometown, San Francisco.

The show didn't stop

on the runway

After the models final walk, a loud, bass-heavy video gave audience members — which included Kanye West, Lady Gaga (smoking front row!) Nicki Minaj, Mary J. Blige, The Weeknd and Miguel — a look back at the designer's biggest moments, from a starry-eyed 21-year-old debuting his first collection to his massive athleisure line for H&M last November. No, Balenciaga was not mentioned (Bye, Felicia).

The after-party

Then Wang nailed that other little thing he's known for: throwing an epic bash. A curtain went up to reveal pole dancers suspended in air. Bottle-popping time. The crowds raged, Hooters waitresses passed out grub and Tinashe, Lil Wayne and Ludacris took the stage.

An ice sculpture at the party spelled out #Wang10. TINA CHADHA

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Across

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6 Apt. unit
10 Well-padded hassock
14 Snorkeler's sight
15 Japanese aborigine
16 Middies' sch.
17 Fujiyama neighbor
18 Many a rambler
19 Cord of firewood
20 Jazz enthusiast
22 Addison's partner
24 Emmy-winning Thompson
25 Ogled
26 Emergencies
30 Naturalist John —
32 Lady Chaplin
33 RBI or ERA
35 Quick to learn
40 Dugout VIP
42 Kind of pencil
44 Unmanned spacecraft
45 In that case (2 wds.)
47 Lectern
48 Blade's sharp side
50 Hugs' companions
52 Edible lizard
56 Cattail
58 Whale or mouse
59 See through till payday (2 wds.)
64 "Dancing Queen" band
65 What the hen did
67 Filmmaker — Kurosawa
68 Departs
69 Grease gun target
70 Ringlet
71 Does something incorrectly
72 Tea-leaves reader
73 It has a crust

Down

1 Injury result
2 Model's position
3 United — Emirates
4 Hunter's wear
5 Slip by, as time
6 Told all
7 3-D display
8 Hosp. workers
9 Granola kin
10 Thick soup
11 Basket-maker's twig
12 Claudius, to Hamlet
13 Pulled a hoax
21 No longer chic
23 Curt
26 Free pass
27 Jungle warning
28 — — time flat
29 Swedish auto
31 Sporty trucks
34 Math subj.
36 CEO degrees
37 Octopi have eight
38 Judge's garb
39 Low cards
41 — Davis of "The Fly"
43 Joined together
46 Like good soil
49 J.R.'s town
51 Form a thought
52 Public persona
53 Eva or Zsa Zsa
54 Brown pigment
55 Pile up, as wealth
57 Diving duck
60 Pod veggie
61 Four in Frankfurt
62 Prefix for while
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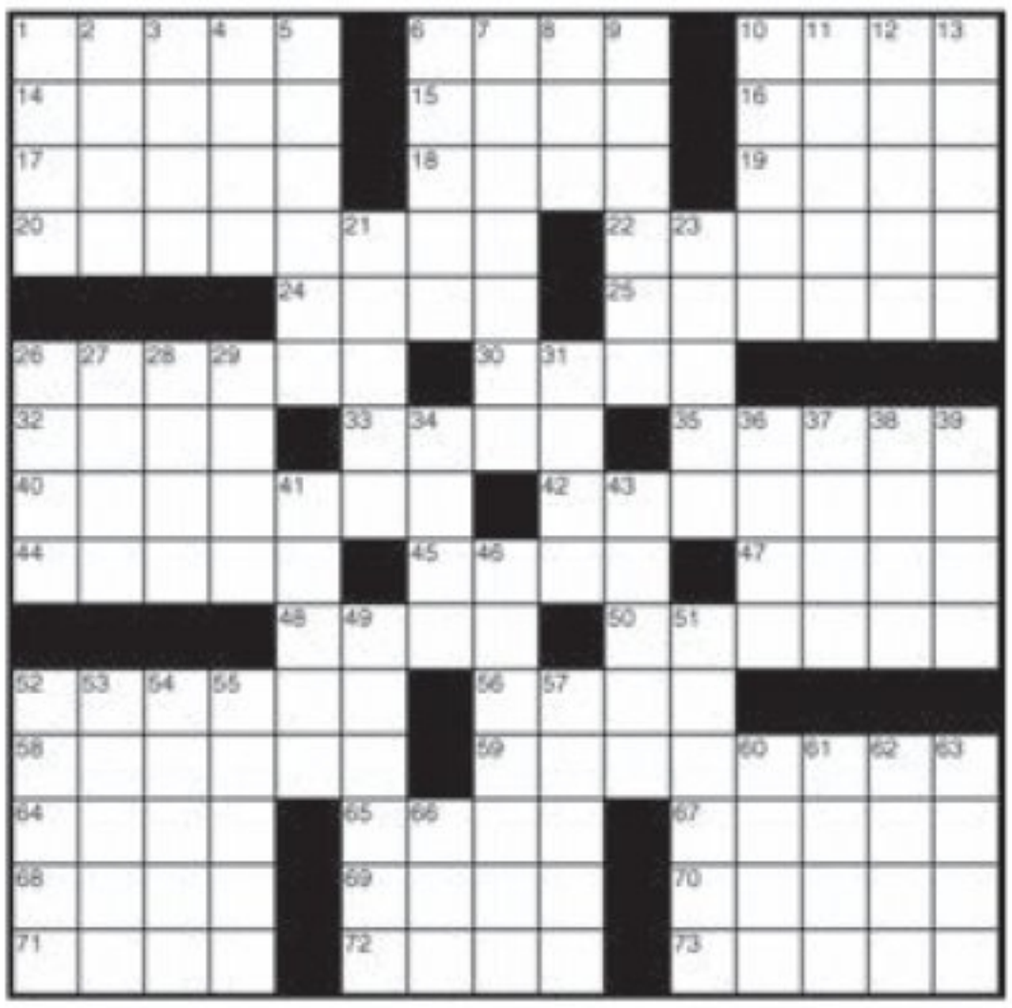

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easy

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/horoscopes

Aries You can maneuver your way through any roadblocks. Don't make the mistake of thinking a bad situation will change if you ignore it.

Taurus Someone will take advantage of your generosity. Your current actions will be instrumental in helping you meet your goals.

Gemini Your creativity and innovative ideas will gain recognition. Compassion will be needed if you are called upon to help a friend in need.

Cancer Socializing and entertainment will take precedence today. Let your thoughts and feelings be known. Communication will be necessary.

Leo You can outmaneuver the competition. Your charisma will help you make a favorable impression on the people who will influence your future.

Virgo Don't allow minor disagreements to turn into major problems. The sooner you resolve your differences, the better.

Libra Strive to be receptive to change. The more thoughtful and patient you are, the easier it will be to balance your life.

Scorpio You will feel overwhelmed with responsibilities. Don't hesitate to delegate some tasks to ease your workload.

Sagittarius If you try to do everything at once, you will fall short. Your ideas will become a reality if you give yourself time to develop your interests.

Capricorn If you ask the right questions, you will be privy to some valuable advice. Investment commitments must be carefully researched.

Aquarius You can force a win from your current tough situation. Decide what's most important and devise a plan to make your dreams come true.

Pisces Deception is apparent. Don't lead anyone on. You will be tempted to stray into unfamiliar territory. EUGENIA LAST

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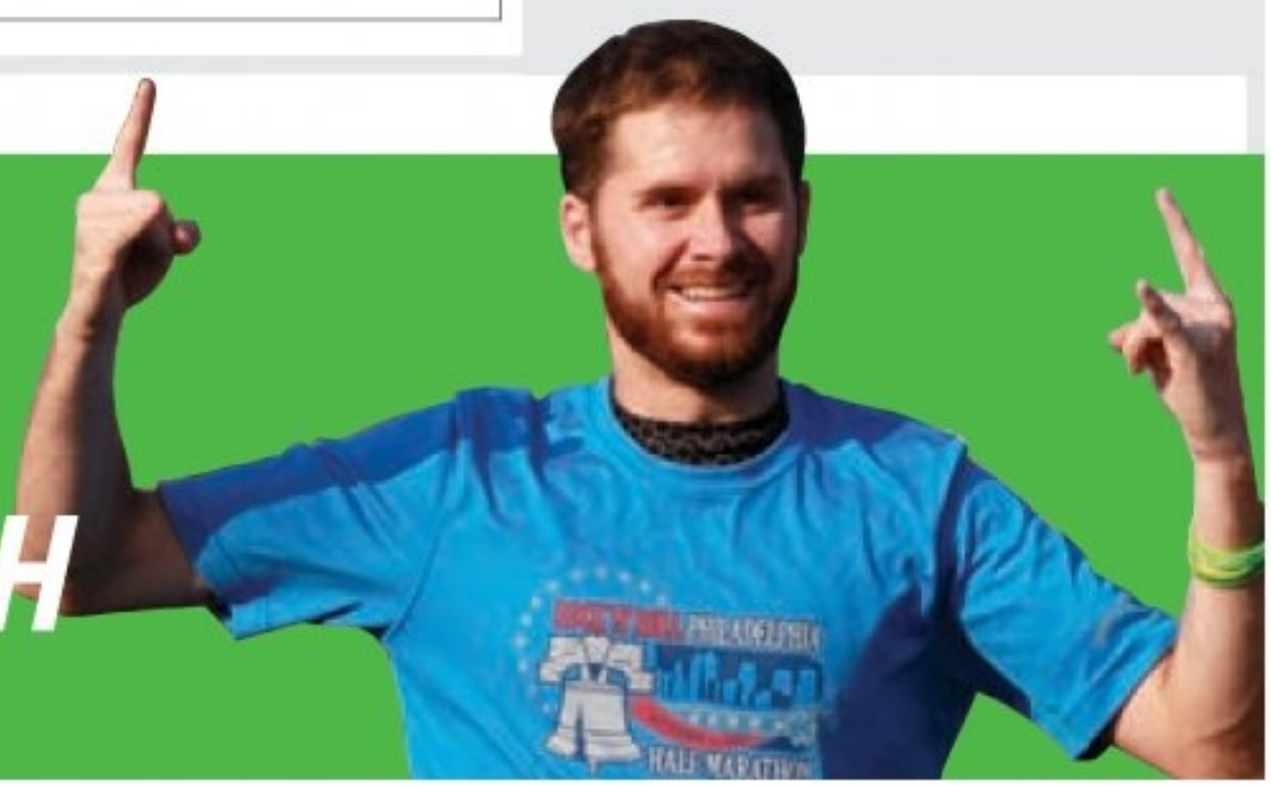

The nonprofit that's fixing worldwide education

Two hundred fifty million children can't read; Pencils of Promise has a solution.

RAQUEL LANERI
RaquelLaneri
raquel.laneri@metro.us

About 250 million children worldwide lack basic reading, writing and math skills.

Pencils of Promise is here to change that. The nonprofit, founded in 2008, builds schools in the developing world, but also so much more.

"We don't want to just be known as a charity; we want to be known for our innovation," says founder Adam Braun, who launched a Kickstarter to help fund PoP's first school in Laos at the age of 25. "We want to determine what education will look like not just for Guatemala but also New York and New Jersey."

Braun and PoP Director of Impact Leslie Engle Young tell us how they're changing education.

Get the community involved

PoP treats the communities it serves not as charity cases but as partners. "We don't want to be seen as these Westerners coming from the outside and telling people what they need," says Braun. "We want to build actually locally sustainable projects."

Communities that partner with PoP contribute at least 20 percent to the cost of building the school, either through labor or materials. The rest is funded by outside donors.

PoP by the numbers

- 300+ schools built
- 30,000+ students served
- 90 percent of teachers report increases in student engagement due to PoP programs
- Students score 3x higher on language literacy tests than their peers

"When we visit a potential community, we spend a lot of time with the administrators, elders, teachers and students," says Young. "That involvement makes them more invested."

Utilize technology

Many schools can't afford physical copies of books. PoP, therefore, uses tablets, e-readers and other creative materials to give students and teachers access to materials. (One e-reader can provide a student with 100 titles in both English and the local language.)

"This is something that could change education in a more radical way," says Braun.

Empower students —

The access to technology also helps push the idea of student-centered learning. "How to get teachers to be involved in peer learning, how to make learning come to life in the classroom, how to use games and other materials," explains Young. "It's imperative that students learn how to learn — and that they want to learn."

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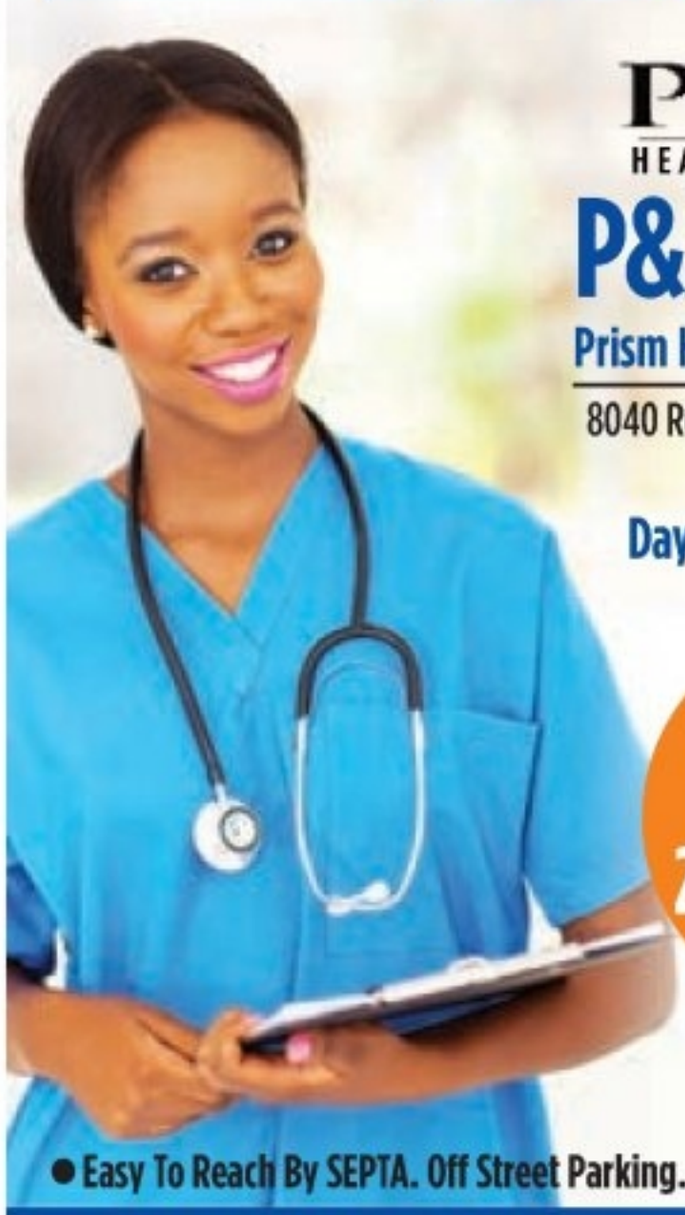

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Annual Public Notice of Special Education Services and Programs, Services for Gifted Students, and Services for Protected Handicapped Students

NOTICE TO PARENTS

According to state and federal special education regulations, annual public notice to parents of children who reside within a school district is required regarding The Philadelphia Public Schools and the Philadelphia Intermediate Unit (IU26) provide special education and related services to resident children with disabilities who are ages three through twenty-one. The purpose of this notice is to describe (1) the types of disabilities that might qualify the child for such programs and services, (2) the special education program and related services that are available, (3) the process by which the public schools screen and evaluate such students to determine eligibility, and (4) the special rights that pertain to such children and their parents or legal guardians.

CHILDREN SERVED IN SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Special education services are available to children who have one or more of the following physical or mental disabilities:

• autism • deaf/blindness • emotional disturbance • hearing impairment, including deafness • mental retardation • multiple disabilities • orthopedic impairment • other health impairment

• specific learning disability • speech or language impairment • traumatic brain injury; and • visual impairment, including blindness • developmental delay (in the case of a pre- school child)

DESCRIPTION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The Public Schools/IU26 provide appropriate special education programs and related services that are:

• provided at no cost to parents; • provided under the authority of a school entity, directly, by referral or by contract; • individualized to meet the educational needs of the child;

• reasonably calculated to yield meaningful educational benefit and progress and designed to conform to an Individual Education Program.

Special education is designed to meet the needs of each eligible student, including specifically designed instruction conducted in the classroom, home, community settings, hospitals, institutions and other settings.

Related services available to students include transportation, corrective and other supportive services that help an eligible student benefit from special education. Examples include: speech pathology and audiology, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, social work services, school health services, medical services for diagnosis or evaluation, parent counseling and education, recreation counseling services, rehabilitation counseling services and assistive technology services.

REFERRAL OF CHILDREN FORSCREENING AND EVALUATION

The Public Schools/IU26 has procedures to identify children needing special education. Those procedures are "screening" and "evaluation." If a disability is suspected, teachers, other school personnel or parents may refer a child for screening and/or evaluation. Parents suspecting that a child may have a disability and need special education can request a screening or evaluation at any time by contacting their school principal. Screening activities include: reviewing immediately available data sources such as health records, parent interview and history; functional vision and hearing evaluations; determining the student's response to attempted remediation; and speech and language screenings are completed on request. If the screening leads to a recommendation for evaluation, the evaluation team will conduct the evaluations. No evaluations may be conducted without written parental permission. Consult your school counselor for further information.

State and federal law affords many rights and protections to children with disabilities and their parents. A summary of these rights and protections follows. Interested persons may obtain a complete written summary of the rights and protections afforded by the law, together with information about free or low cost legal services and advice, by contacting the special education coordinator or principal of the local public school.

RIGHTS AND PROTECTIONS

Prior Written Notice: The public school must notify you in writing whenever it proposes to initiate or to change the identification, evaluation, educational program or placement of a child or whenever it refuses to initiate or make a change in identification, evaluation, educational program, or placement requested by a parent. Such notice must be accompanied by a written description of the reasons for the proposal or refusal, the options considered, if any, and the reason why such options were rejected.

Consent: The public school cannot proceed with an evaluation or with the initial provision of special education and related services without the written consent of the parent. A public school may not seek a hearing to override the refusal of a parental consent to an initial placement in special education. A public school may override the lack of consent for an initial evaluation by requesting the approval of an impartial hearing officer or judge following a hearing. If the parent fails to respond to a written request for permission to revaluate, however, the public school may proceed with the proposed revaluation without consent.

Protection In Evaluation Procedure: Evaluations to determine eligibility and current need for special education and related services must be administered in a manner that is free of racial, cultural, or linguistic bias. Evaluations cannot consist of a single test or assessment and testing must be a valid measure of the psychological, social, emotional or other learning characteristic or behavior that the school is using it to measure. Testing and assessment must be administered in accordance with professional standards and the criteria established by the publisher. It must be administered in the native language of the child.

Confidentiality: The records and documents that are part of the evaluation and screening process are confidential and protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). School districts, intermediate units, and charter schools maintain records concerning all children enrolled in the school, including students with disabilities. All records are maintained in the strictest confidentiality. Your consent, or consent of an eligible child who has reached the age of majority under State law, must be obtained before personally identifiable information is released, except as permitted under FERPA. The age of majority in Pennsylvania is 21. Each participating agency must protect the confidentiality of personally identifiable information at collection, storage, disclosure, and destruction stages. One official at each participating agency must assume responsibility for ensuring the confidentiality of any personally identifiable information. Each participating agency must maintain, for public inspection, a current listing of the names and positions of those employees who have access to personally identifiable information. For additional information related to student records, the parent can refer to FERPA.

MORE INFORMATION

This notice is only a summary of the Special Education services, evaluation and screening activities, and rights and protections pertaining to children with disabilities, children thought to be disabled, and their parents. For more information or to request evaluation or screening of a public or private school child contact the responsible school entity listed below. For preschool age children (ages 3-5), information, screenings and evaluations requested, may be obtained by contacting Elwyn SEEDS at 215-222-8054. Detailed printed information about available special education services and programs and Philadelphia/IU26 policies are available from the School District/IU upon request. Anyone interested should contact the principal of the child's school. Information and communications are in English, but will be provided in the native language or other modes of communication used by parents, if appropriate. Information can also be found on the School District's website: **http://webgui.phila.k12.pa.us/offices/s/oss/child-find.**

Office of Specialized Services (OSS) 440 North Broad St., 2nd Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19130

Main office phone: 215-400-4170 | Fax: 215-400-4175 • Parent Hotline: 267-784-9274

Charter School Office Email: charters@philasd.org • Main office phone: 215-400-4090

Neighborhood Network 1 South Philadelphia High School, 2101 S. Broad St., Philadelphia, PA 19148 • Phone: 215-952-6220 | Fax: 215-551-2275

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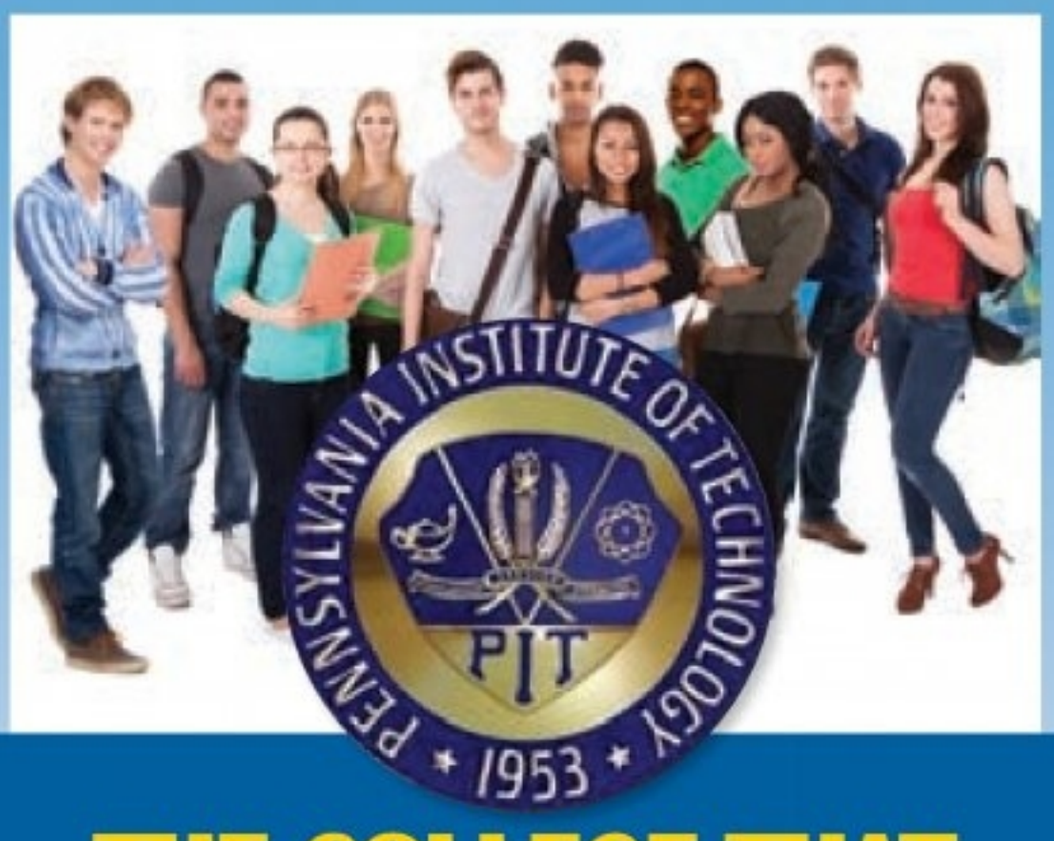

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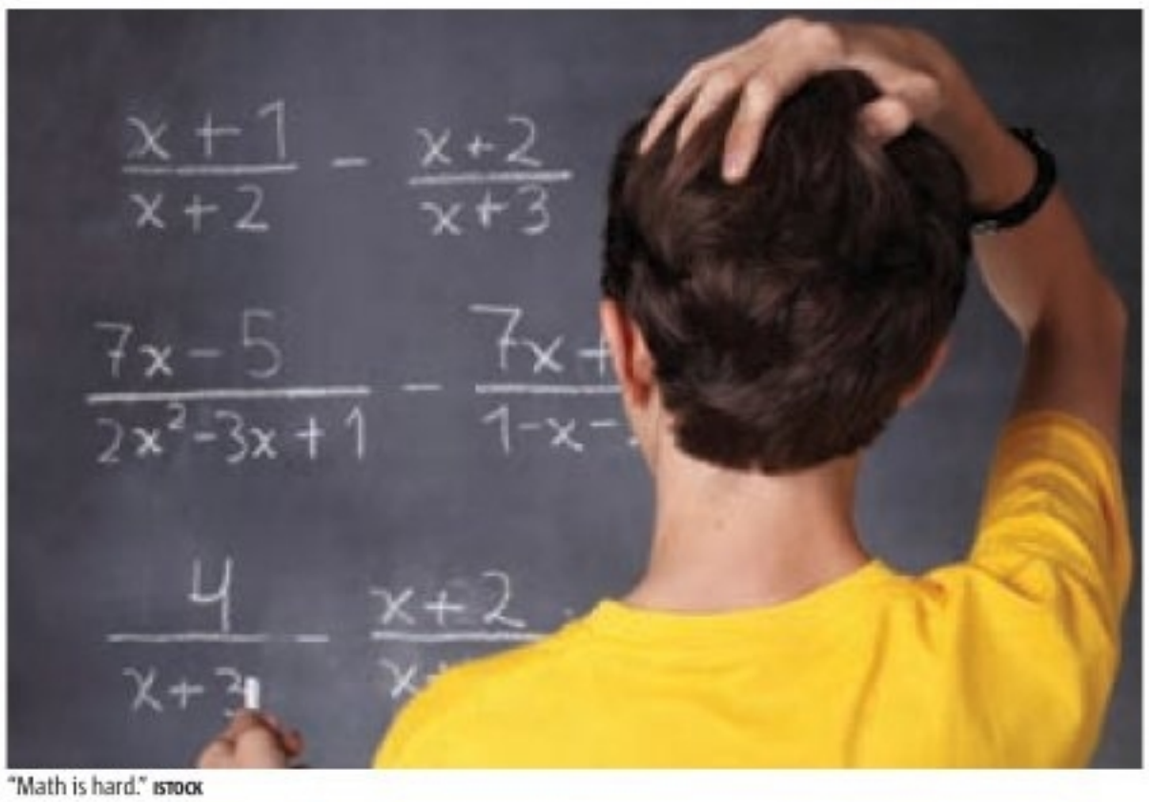

"Math is hard." ISTOCK

Researchers have found that adults may be undermining their children's math abilities.

RAQUEL LANERI
Ⓐ RaquelLaneri
raquel.laneri@metro.us

Anyone can be good at math — as long as parents don't get in the way.

According to new research published in Psychology Science, it turns out that "math-anxious" adults could be preventing their kids from being the next Pythagoras. Ugh, mom and dad really do ruin everything.

The study, conducted by a team at the University of Chicago, observed 438 first- and second-graders and their parents, assessing them on both their math ability and their math anxiety at the beginning and end of the school year.

But while the parents did show to have an effect on their kids' performance, math aptitude doesn't appear to be genetic. Math-anxious parents only negatively affected their kids' achievements when they helped them regularly with homework.

"We often don't think about how important parents' own attitudes are in determining their children's academic achievement," researcher Sian Beilock said in a release. "But our work suggests that if a parent is walking around saying, 'Oh, I don't like math,' or, 'This stuff makes me nervous,' kids pick up on this messaging, and it affects their success."

Briefs

The hottest schools in the US

Tinder is on a quest to find the best-looking campuses — and we aren't talking about manicured grounds and historic architecture.

The dating app has released a study of the "most desirable student bodies" (ugh, its words), crunching the numbers to determine the colleges with the most "swipe rights."

The results? Apparently, Georgetown is the No. 1 place to "meet" (look at?) attractive guys, while Florida State wins the crown for most-swiped gals.

Here are the rest of the top five for both women and men — which, really, Tinder, how heteronormative.

ISTOCK

The most swiped-right males:
1. Georgetown University
2. Brigham Young University
3. University of Notre Dame
4. Texas Christian University
5. Air Force Academy

The most swiped-right females:
1. Florida State University
2. University of Miami
3. University of Mississippi
4. University of Colorado Boulder
5. University of Alabama RL

Buffalo upsets Luck and Colts, Rams stun Seattle

NFL. Opening day in the NFL proved to provide plenty of drama and upsets in the early going.

Seahawks fans looking to get out from under the spectre of the 2015 Super Bowl's final play call didn't have any luck Sunday. The Seahawks began overtime with another questionable decision, attempting an onside kick. The Rams recovered and kicked a field goal before stopping the Seahawks and Marshawn Lynch (18 carries, 73 yards) to win 34-31.

Jets 31, Browns 10

Johnny Manziel (13-24, 182, 1 TD, 1 INT) put the Browns up 7-0 with a 54-yard touchdown pass to Travis Benjamin on his second throw after starting quarterback Josh McCown left the game with a concussion. The day went downhill from there for the Browns, as the Jets triumphed behind Chris Ivory, who ran for 92 yards and two TDs.

Bills 27, Colts 14

It was a disappointing season opener for Indianapolis as the off-season hype built around their offense dissolved in the face of the Bills' defense. Andrew Luck (26 for 49, 243 yards, 2 TD, 2 INT) had a dismal day, averaging only five yards per attempt.

Packers 31, Bears 23

A late Clay Matthews interception helped the Packers hold off the Bears in a surprisingly close NFC North matchup. Reigning NFL MVP Aaron Rodgers threw three touchdown passes despite the absence of star receiver Jordy Nelson.

Nick Foles had a memorable St. Louis debut Sunday. / GETTY IMAGES

Dolphins 17, Redskins 10

Jarvis Landry took a punt return 69 yards to the end zone for the deciding score. Dolphins first-round pick, Devante Parker, got on the field but was held without a reception for the game.

Chiefs 27, Texans 20

The Chiefs survived 11 fourth-quarter points from Houston. Alex Smith threw three touchdowns for Kansas City, two to tight end Travis Kelce, who had 6 catches for 106 yards.

Panthers 20, Jaguars 9

Cam Newton (18 for 31, 175, TD, INT) hooked up with Jerricho Cotchery for one touchdown, and Josh Norman returned an interception 30 yards for a score while recovering a fumble. That was enough to get past the Jaguars.

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3

SPORTS

Phillies 7, Cubs 4

Phillies pull series draw

Building off of Saturday's momentum (after Cody Asche and the Phillies walked off with a homer), Philly kept its offense hot, with Ryan Howard blasting a two-run homer and adding an RBI sac-fly to split the four-game set with Chicago on Sunday. Washington comes to town Monday.

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3 Things to watch as Eagles open season under lights in Atlanta

NFL. The Eagles season finally kicks off against the Falcons Monday at 7:10 p.m. on ESPN.

It's as if the football gods (or NFL schedule makers) wanted to create as much drama as possible for Eagles fans.

After one of the most tumultuous and memorable offseasons in memory, the Eagles are finally ready to kick off. The Falcons are the only NFC team that the Eagles havn't seen during Chip Kelly's regime, and after a 6-10 year in 2014 Atlanta has not done much to improve its team (aside from hiring a new head coach). Here are three keys for the Birds, 3.5 point favorites Monday night:

EVAN MACY
@evan_macy
evan.macy@metro.us

Will Byron Maxwell prove to be worth his monster $63 million deal? / GETTY IMAGES

1 First test of new secondary

The Eagles had an atrocious secondary in 2014 and by many accounts, the play of Bradley Fletcher and Cary Williams cost the team a playoff berth down the stretch.

Gone are the aforementioned players, as is Brandon Boykin and Nate Allen. Enter a slew of new defensive backs — including high-priced former Legion of Boom cornerback Byron Maxwell and young, hungry players like rookie Eric Rowe and veteran Nolan Carroll III.

Though they held their own, for the most part, during the preseason, it was just the preseason. They'll be thoroughly tested and possibly exploited against Atlanta.

2 Stop the Ryan-to-Jones combo

Julio Jones and Matt Ryan are a dangerous combination, one that Kelly is fully award of.

"He's not just a flatline guy. He can do everything," Kelly said. "He's a really savvy route runner in terms of setting up defensive backs for his move, so he's really the total package."

The Eagles defense will need to keep track of Jones, and the rest of Ryan's weapons all game.

"That's the challenge that's presented," the coach said, "especially with such an accurate quarterback throwing the football, is that he can gain a little advantage because of his size and his route-running ability. Even if he has just a little separation, Matt's going to put it on him."

Hit the ground running

The Eagles have a three-headed monster in DeMarco Murray, Ryan Mathews and Darren Sproles. And any combination of two, or all three of them can give a defense fits.

The Birds ran the ball a lot more than people gave them credit for in 2014, tallying top 10 marks in rushing attempts per game and rushing yards per game. If they want to be successful and create the highest probability of success for Sam Bradford and the passing game, they'll need to get all three guys in the mix.

"The biggest thing for us is we just want to keep someone fresh in the game," Kelly said.

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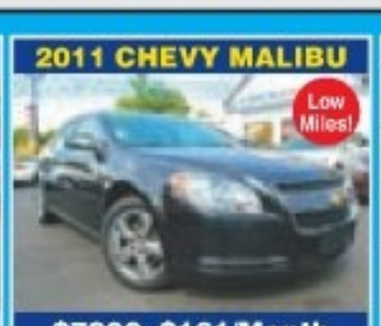

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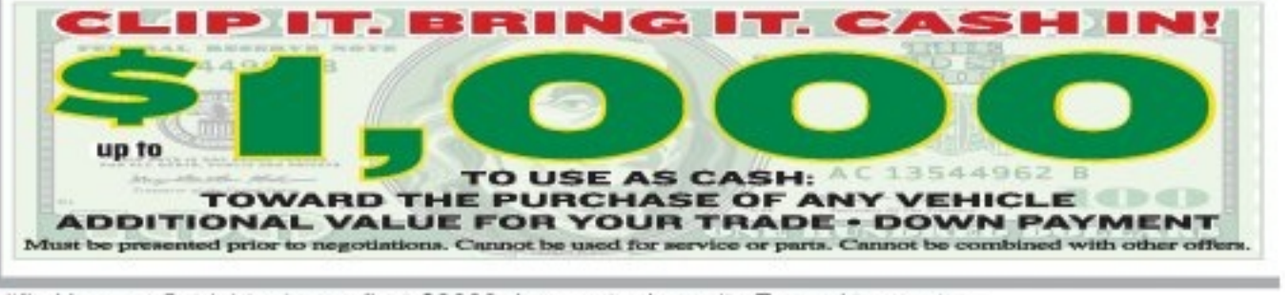
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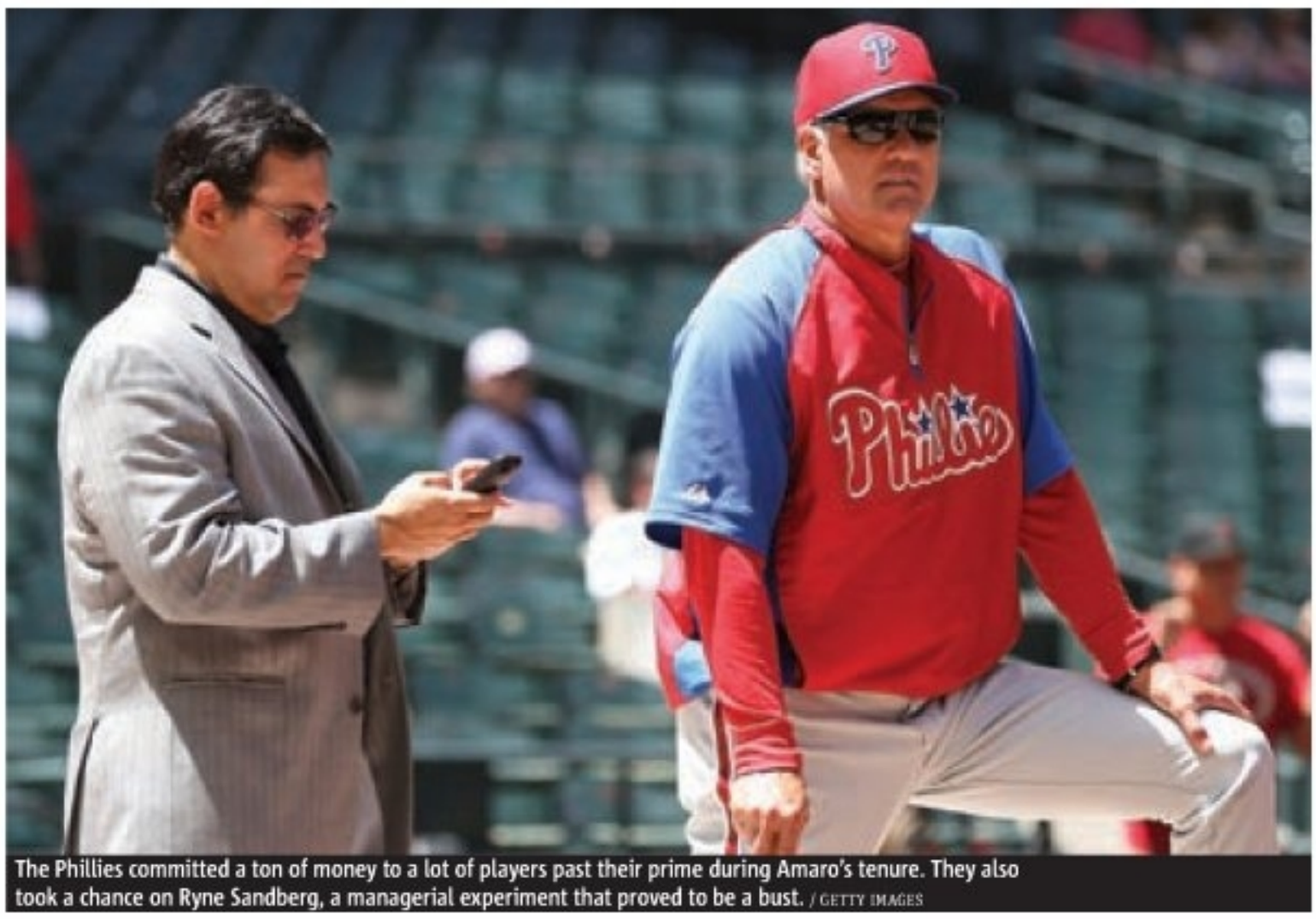

The Phillies committed a ton of money to a lot of players past their prime during Amaro's tenure. They also took a chance on Ryne Sandberg, a managerial experiment that proved to be a bust. / GETTY IMAGES

Amaro paid the price for sins as Phils' GM

MLB. After his prior mistakes, there was no chance the Phillies were going to bring back Ruben Amaro Jr.

It was only a matter of time before the Phillies pulled the plug on the Ruben Amaro era. Andy MacPhail and Phillies ownership, led by John Middleton, relieved the beleaguered general manager of his duties Thursday afternoon.

"You knew that Amaro was going to go," an NL scout said. "He had to go. That was a no-brainer when you consider the overall picture. It was only a matter of when he would go."

Amaro's sins were considerable. Trading so many prospects to Houston for Hunter Pence. Receiving so little for Pence when he was dealt to San Francisco. Trading Cliff Lee to Seattle for three prospects, who failed to make any impact with the Phillies. There was Jonathan Papelbon's ridiculous contract and Ryan Howard's unfortunate deal, which continues to plague the Phillies.

After receiving a number of promising prospects in the Cole Hamels, Jimmy Rollins and Chase Utley deals, there was some buzz that Amaro might have a stay of execution.

But that was merely sports-talk-radio fodder. Why bring in Andy MacPhail as the new sheriff in town if you're merely going to stay status quo?

Middleton is embracing overdue change in an organization that has stayed a certain course for too long.

"It's hard sometimes to convince people when they're highly successful, as the Phillies have been, that maybe the world is changing and maybe you need to look at it a little differently," Middleton said.

Make no mistake about it, Middleton, who seems to have some Ed Snider in him, wants to win. The Phillies are in the middle of a much-needed transition. Young players, such as Maikel Franco, are making an impact.

"I'm very excited about being part of this," Franco said. "We've got some good young players here and good young players who will come up. We're going to be there [contending] pretty soon."

The Phillies will need a capable, innovative new general manager to enable the franchise to become a viable player again.

"But they can get there sooner than later," the scout said. "They have some nice prospects and they have the resources."

After this season, the start of the $2.5 billion deal with Comcast kicks in. There is a future for Phillies baseball.

There is a future for Amaro as well. According to a source, the Angels would like to speak with the Stanford alum. So the Phillies and Amaro will move on but in separate directions.

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Into the abyss

The Phillies descended further and further under Ruben Amaro's leadership.

- 2009: World Series loss to Yankees (NL East title)
- 2010: NLCS defeat to the Giants (NL East title)
- 2011: NLDS defeat to the Cardinals (NL East title, team record in wins)
- 2012: 81-81 record, missed playoffs
- 2013-15: 201-266 record (through Saturday)

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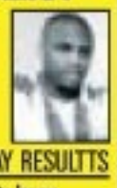

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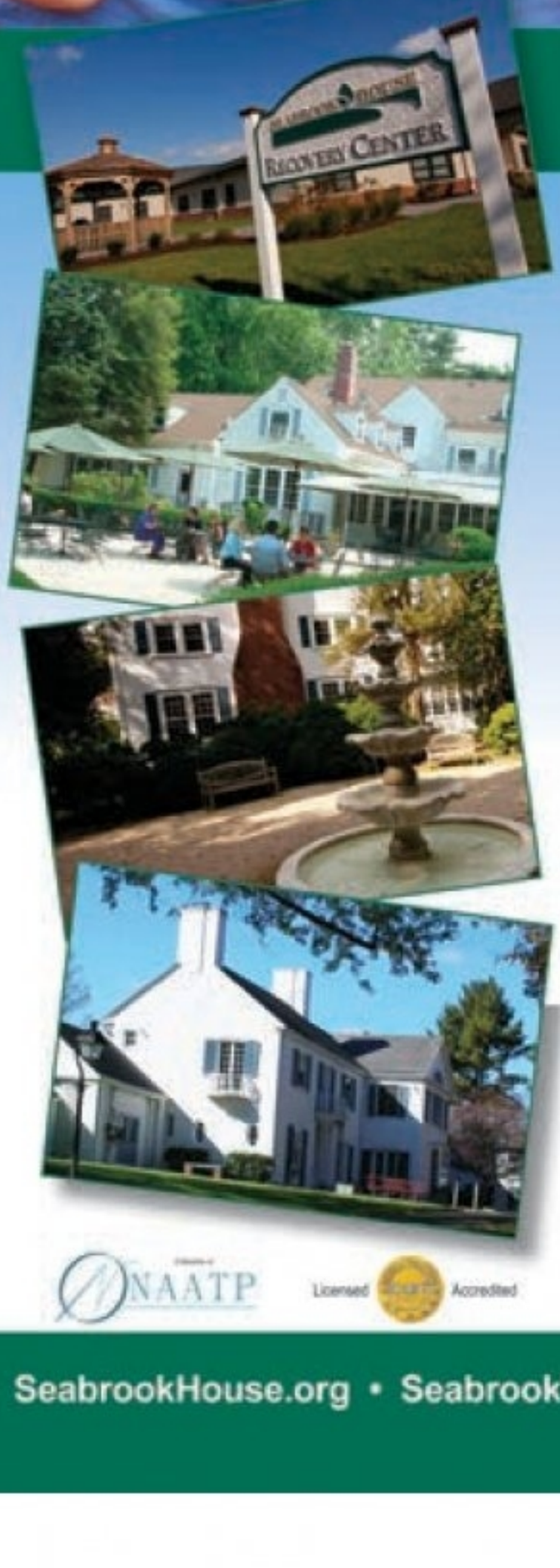

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